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Vegetarian

A letter to William Horsell

Derby

1850

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A LETTER

TO

WILLIAM HORSELL, ESQ.,

SECRETARY OF THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY,

IN REPLY TO HIS PAMPHLET

ENTITLED

“EMIGRATION UNNECESSARY, IMPOLITIC,  
AND INJURIOUS.”

BY A VEGETARIAN.

DERBY:  
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.  
1850.

TO WILLIAM HORSELL, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF THE TRACT ENTITLED

“EMIGRATION UNNECESSARY, IMPOLITIC  
AND INJURIOUS.”

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SIR,

Your concise, and in many respects valuable, little work which bears the above-quoted title, has recently fallen into my hands, and, with your permission, I claim as a Brother Vegetarian and Philanthropist, the privilege of replying to the remarks and propositions you therein offer to the world at large.

Heartily agreeing with you upon some points, and diametrically opposed to you in others, I now commence the “tug of war,” a war bloodless, happily, but, as Canning prophesied, “*a war of opinion.*”

You say that “*Emigration is Unnecessary*”—so far as we now practise it, it is—you affirm that “*Emigration is Impolitic*”—as we now force emigration, every child can tell us so—you assert that “*Emigration is Injurious*”—a position which in reference to our present principle of emigration I should imagine that no one possessed of the most ordinary degree of observative power or common sense will for a moment deny.

So much for our points of agreement, let us now call over the muster-roll of differences of opinion.

You in the 14th page of the Pamphlet vehemently exclaim against “*robbery*” in one shape, and as strenuously advocate it in another. You say “*you would have ALL land national property,*” and you proceed to “*deny the right to shut up ANY portion of it.*” Well then, under your proposed rule, my garden, house, and grounds being “*national property,*” are to be considered as open

to the "nation," drunk, sober, flesh-eating, or vegetarian, thieves, honest men or what not, at any time or at any hour when "the nation" may be pleased to be in the humour to honour me with a visit, and claim the premises as its own.

Now, it is wrong to find fault with one man's scheme without proposing a better; and it is also considered egotistical to speak or write about one's own self, and self's affairs; but in the present instance I cannot point out the extreme inconvenience and annoyance which would inevitably result from your confiscation system more emphatically, than by stating how it would affect No. 1, though I will not leave you without a suggestion by way of alternative in lieu of your "national property" scheme. I am a poor man, and occupy under very peculiar circumstances a much larger quantity of land than I have strength or capital to cultivate at all; you, of course, would take this land from me, cultivate it for "the nation," and expose me to the insufferable annoyance of having a number of the "nation's" flesh-eating, alcohol-swilling, poaching, blaspheming labourers constantly at my very doors and gates, at all times, hours, and seasons, just because I am poor, and though perfectly willing and able to work, have not sufficient capital to pay others for properly cultivating the land, or assisting me to do it. Now, if this be not "robbery," or a very good imitation of it I have done,—if it be *justice* I should like to know what *equity* means. My peculiar notion, however, is, that the "nation" has no more *right* to confiscate any man's property unless he be a felon or a murderer, than I have to take possession of your Printing Office and all its Paraphernalia, because, as one of "the nation," all *your* goods and chattels belong to me upon your principle, if I choose to claim them. But this I say—and say it deliberately too—that *THE NATION is bound by every principle of honour, justice, or equity, to furnish me with the requisite amount of Capital to enable me to cultivate my own land, (but for no other purpose mind ye,) according to the best of my knowledge and talent, so long as I am industrious and inclined to do justice to the land itself.* And I say that the system now pursued towards

*our bankrupt neighbours of the Sister Isle, must have been hatched in hell itself, and conceived in the brain of the Viceroy of that kingdom of never-dying fire.\**

I say, that the fact of there being one single bankrupt in the United Kingdom in this age of intellect, science, and divine light, is a crying shame upon you, Sir, upon me, upon every inhabitant of the kingdom of Great Britain; from our beloved Queen upon the throne, to the poor wretch who gains his livelihood by crawling up and down the sewers of your over-grown metropolis. And it will remain thus, while we support a system which authorizes us to go to the bankrupt's house or premises because we choose to dub them "national property" forsooth, and after having placed every facility and incentive in his way to *make himself* a bankrupt, to send your thieves and robbers, (for they are neither more nor less in actual fact) under cover of the *LAW*—(who made this *law*, man, or the Redeemer, whose name we usurp?) to steal his goods in broad open day, because he has fallen into the trap which "the nation," in the infinite subtlety of its wisdom, so cleverly laid for him. But if "confiscation" be the only remedy for "Emigration," or the only alternative we have to offer, all I can say is, my most hearty prayers shall be offered up that the kind-hearted proposers of either, Sidney Herbert and my friend William Horsell to wit, may be the first pair to be driven out of Paradise into the world of "National Property," which they would have others banished to.

So much for our differences of opinion. Now for a few words upon the statistical portion of your pamphlet. It will be needless to recapitulate those which have already so often appeared in print; let us have something fresh—new—*startling* even—if you please, and I will begin with broaching an opinion which I ventured to put forth some years ago, which was then abundantly ridiculed, but which is now silently, though surely, gaining ground.

\* No offence to the late Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, but as much as you please to him of the place above-mentioned.

So far from its being *just* that a tenant should *pay* for the occupation of *any* land, whether private or "national" property, I do and will assert that he ought to be *paid* for occupying and tilling it, and to be entirely freed from all anxiety or care about public or "national" burdens, of rents, rates, taxes, or all such-like abominations, *if you intend that either his natural powers, or those of the land should be developed to the utmost.* Every occupant or tiller of the land (such I presume to be his inestimable value to the community at large) ought to be as diligently and unceasingly cared for by his landlord or "the nation," as the race-horse, or the grey-hound, or the first-rate hunter or carriage-horse is by his or their owners. Every article which can possibly contribute to their want, comfort, or convenience, ought to be furnished them in the most lavish profusion; their families should be provided for and educated at the public charge, and all care, except for their occupation, removed as far as possible, and not the slightest risk or shadow even of risk should be theirs if it could by *any means* be avoided.

You will ask how all this is to be effected? I answer, With the greatest ease, and with less than a tithe of the trouble you now take *not* to effect it.

You must have "free-trade" in *money*, as well as in corn; free-trade in a *representative* of value as well as in value itself; free-trade in talent and no patents, as well as free-trade in bricks (!) *Talent* must *first* be made "national property," and not *land*; and your own "Printing Office," as well as a certain gigantic establishment in Printing-house Square, Blackfriars, must be decapitated by the guillotine which you so cleverly have invented for, and proposed to handsel upon us poor cultivators of the soil.

There is no question about the powers of production of the earth for the support of man, therefore we will not tarry drivelling about *them*; they are the gift of an Illimitable Creator, and as such partake of his Illimitable nature: but we must not be told with respect to them, as I was recently informed by a manufacturer, that "we produce annually six hundred millions of pound's worth

of *goods*, and have only fifty-two millions of *money* to pay for them when produced.

We *must* not, and we *will* not, any longer be compelled to tie down the powers of production, either of the earth or man's talent, wherewith the almighty has so bountifully endowed us, to a certain amount of "gold, silver, or brass" at a price or value fixed by man's *wisdom*—or, man's *folly*—which is it?

We must "break this yoke, and undo this heavy burden;" we must "let the oppressed" earth and its inhabitants "go free," and a better season or more apposite opportunity could not be found than in our Creator's own year of "free gift" to man, "*the year of release*," the "*year of Jubile*," 1850.

There are men enow ready, friend Horsell, to do the work on the instant, if we will but take the trouble to enquire for them; for God never cuts out work for us without first giving us the means of doing it, though man in his stupidity is for ever thus putting the cart before the horse. We can find "representatives of value" to the amount of six thousand millions of pounds instead of six *hundred*, if we choose; and the fact of our being able, if God be willing, to produce goods or food to that amount annually, is no more doubted, than our power to go from Derby to London in five hours now is. Then what are we about *not* to do it? Why should we not have a home-market to this amount, and a representative of value to this amount for this home-market expressly,—call it *pound-notes*, *bills of exchange*, or by whatever denomination "the nation" pleases, and keep your "precious (!) metals" for your foreign transactions? Why not? I repeat. "Oh, but," say you, "every body would be rich, and there would be no poor if your plan was adopted." Why not? I again ask, if by such means you provide for all, and sweep away "utterly with the besom of destruction" the dense thunder-cloud of taxation, poor's rates, highway rates, and shameless exactions wherewith we now oppress the energies, both physical and intellectual, of our fellow creatures? What right have we to confiscate their property for "the nation," or compel them by poverty to emigrate, when a

little reflection, and a great deal of exertion, would enable us to do so much better both for them and for us? None; *but we hate the trouble of reflecting*, and still more do we abhor the task of exerting ourselves (physically I mean) for the sake of those whom, by our present system, we can compel to *over-exert* themselves, both physically and mentally, for us, for our own profit, for our own good, and so "make merchandize" of them, both body and soul, cheating them all the while out of their birthright as fellow-men, and heirs of immortality with us, under the pretence that we are doing all we can for their support. If we, as Vegetarians, can do no better than thus, "under a *green*" and flourishing "tree" of Vegetarianism, how dare we blame the flesh-eating, evil-spirit-swilling brotherhood for what *they* do "under the *dry tree*" of *their* decayed system? What are we in absolute fact better than they, in the sight of "Him who seeth not as man sees?" But, Sir, why should we not take "*300 men that lap*" water—teetotallers and vegetarians—and do as Gideon did? Let 300 men of us agree to overthrow, with our Maker's help and permission, *the monetary system of the world, and offer a better instead*; let us have free-trade in money, and let your printing-press be wholly employed in the manufacture of a representative of value, while our adherents are employed in furnishing and manufacturing the value to exchange for the representative.

What sort of an "EXHIBITION" do you suppose could be offered to the world in 1851 if we were to agree to do this? Could not 300 men among your Society be found whose incomes would average £100 each? Well, take the average thus, by the aid of steam you can make thirty representatives of a pound's value for the small sum of one penny, 7200 for one pound, and 2,160,000 as the annual produce of your "300 men who lap" water as their only beverage. "Statistically" advancing, we will suppose that this monetary or representative-of-value produce shall be laid out upon the land exclusively, how much land would it cultivate, how many families would it maintain? Instead of "confiscating" our neighbour's land, we could afford to

hire of him 720,000 acres at a rent of £3 per acre, and applying four acres to the support of a family, we could afford to maintain 180,000 families, averaging five persons to a family, or 900,000 persons, by the sole instrumentality of the "*300 men who lap*" and the power and talent wherewith their Maker has blessed them. What is there to prevent this being done? Nothing but "the adversary" or "Satan" of our own perverse will. We are constantly calling out for help when we ought to be doing the work ourselves, and, like the people of California, running all over the world for gold, when it lay in profusion at their very thresholds, and under their feet at every step they took. Let those, then, who see a stumbling-block in their brother's path, not be content with pointing it out to him, and telling him to pick it up, but *let them remove it themselves as soon as perceived*, you can do it easily in half the time you take to tell him to do it. I for one, am ready, and I fearlessly tell my fellow-sufferers from our present odious, anti-christian, anti-gospel laws, that their Exodus out of this "cruel bondage" rests wholly with themselves, the legislature neither can help them, nor would if they could; our gracious and beloved Sovereign would, if she were permitted, but her hands are tied as well as ours; nevertheless, when our emancipation is effected, she shall go with us, or we shall be as a hive of bees without *their* queen, and we all know the fate of such a headless community. But we must not wait for "*the government*," or *any* government, to do the work our Master has bidden us do for Him. He tells us to lighten labour in every possible manner, and if His Gospel cannot remove the "curse of toil," and make this wilderness of a world a very Paradise again, then the sooner we openly profess ourselves "a nation" of infidels the better, and cease to mock our great Creator and his creatures by professions of service, when in reality our only intention is to serve ourselves of them. We will neither confiscate any man's property be he rich or poor, nor by poverty compel man or woman to expatriate themselves, or submit to a felon's fate at our dictation. We will *do to others as we would that others should do to us*, were our situations

reversed, and our first step to effect this, must be to remove every impediment to the *immediate* realization of such a desirable consummation. There are enow men among us to do the work, and the sooner we manfully betake ourselves to it the better, while time is granted to perform it in. Let us "up and be *doing*" in our Redeemer's name; and while others are drivelling about it, let us with our "lamps burning in our hands," and pitchers for our "300 *men who lap*," go forth as Gideon's men went forth, and then while the others are talking about it, we shall be enabled to say of the work in the emphatic language of Him who gave it us to do, "It is *DONE*."

And now, Sir, you will probably wish me to bring this lengthy epistle to a close, and I will endeavour to do this by a sketch of our line of procedure. Some years ago the Guernsey people wanted a Market-House, they had not the money, i.e., *the gold*, to build it with, so they agreed among themselves to make a *representative of value* instead, they did so: it (the market-house) cost them £8000, or rather 8000 representatives of pounds, and it now lets I believe for 400 *real* pounds per annum, or more, and the *actual* cost was not 8000 pence. Now, my first step would be to ascertain *exactly* how the Guernseyites did the thing, and then "go and do likewise;" there are plenty of Land-owners ready to let you have the land at a fair rent, if you on your part guarantee its proper and profitable cultivation; this can be done with the utmost certainty on a scale hitherto unheard of in modern ages, but practised by Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, and the Pharaohs—strange prototypes and instructors for farmers and gardeners you will say, but still in my opinion not men to be despised. I would then organize our Industrial forces as the East India Company do their troops, for I take it that with such an ill-disciplined, badly-paid, worse-educated force as our agricultural labourers are, one half of our time, and two-thirds at least of our talent, are utterly wasted in such a climate as that of these islands. Where we now lay out five or ten pounds per acre on our land *worse than* uselessly, I would no more begrudge one thousand or

five thousand representatives of a pound's value than I would ten thousand such representatives (in the shape of debentures) upon a mile of railway, without which the railway would never have been made. In short I would take Nature as my Instructress, because she is my Maker's agent, and whatever the land really needed, or those who worked it, both should have, unstintingly, and the moment it was wanted. Where we now send a man and two horses with a plough into a six-acre field for a month or two not to half-cultivate it, and in this climate to have two days' work spoiled by one day's weather, and so have to do it over again a dozen times, I would send a squadron of "agricultural cavalry," or men with proper machines to do the entire work in the half of one fine day. I would have drying houses for all our produce, and so do away with the risk of waiting for weather, and damage of our crops; acres of ground should be covered over with glass and proper buildings, to defend our fruits from the attacks of game, birds, and vermin; and every advantage should be taken of the fair weather and bright talents which our God has given us. No invention should be patented, but every inventor cherished as an angel or messenger to us from the Almighty, to shew us how the work should be done; and even by these few enumerations of possibilities, I think we should find that if we literally took His word as our guide, we should find that word verified to the last letter unto us, that "nothing should be impossible" to us, so long as we did our duty to Him, and to our neighbour, *in His own way*. To enter into all details would fill volumes, and the projector of a railway is not expected to bring before the public a minute description of the various parts of a locomotive. This is the duty of the engineer, and in such a movement as I have now ventured to propose, each of us would have his own particular sphere of duty to engage his exclusive attention. As a Vegetarian people we are now abundantly ridiculed, let us then show to the world what the Almighty can effect even by the weakest and least esteemed among men. Let us ponder well the promises



given in the 60th chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, especially the first and last verses.

With every apology for these free remarks upon your pamphlet,

I remain, Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

THE AUTHOR.

P.S. Nothing ought to be left undone to render labour attractive. The kitchen *ought to be* the most comfortable and most superbly furnished room in the house—the garden—a tropical Eden, and all this "*without money and without price*," and by means of simple obedience to the command of Him who said, "*whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye to them likewise*."

Now, I would ask, can this be done in obedience to *our Law*, and if not, which master ought we to serve and obey, the Law or the Gospel? "Choose ye then this day which ye *will* serve," and take as your reward either "*the curse of the Law*," from which Christ himself came to earth to set us free, or the "*blessing of the Gospel*" which He freely offers us, "*Mount Ebal*" or "*Mount Gerizim*."

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